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ABSTRACT

This book describes the 14-year evolution of a public alternative inner-city high school, New Haven's (Connecticut) High School in the Community (HSC), which lives the empowerment ideology and is dedicated to developing a caring and humanized approach to education. Students are encouraged to participate in shaping many aspects of their education, teachers are responsible for running the school, and parents are invited to help govern the school. The empowerment ideology pervades the curriculum; school organizational structures and processes; and relationships among students, teachers, and parents. Focus is on the creation of a school setting that empowers its participants, its guiding assumptions, its planning, its struggles in putting its ideology into practice, and its survival. Evaluation data show that the school creates an institutional culture consistent with its ideology. Classrooms are interpersonally oriented and innovative, and deemphasize hierarchical teacher-student relationships and competition. Data show the stages through which new settings pass and highlight three general emphases that are relevant to stage theories and evolution of settings: (1) continuity and change in developing settings; (2) studying stages across different settings; and (3) internal and external factors that affect the stages. Included are 52 references. (RLC)

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